



Bill to aid energy costs advances

For Immediate Release: August 30, 2013

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MERCED, CA – Legislation aimed at helping Merced Irrigation District minimize its electric fees has passed the state legislature and will proceed to the governor.

“We are extremely grateful for the diligent work of our local legislators in helping pass Senate Bill 591,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard. “This marks a significant step in MID’s ongoing efforts to minimize fees to our customers under California’s clean-energy-purchase mandate.”

In 2011, the legislature established a law requiring all utilities to have 33 percent renewable energy by the year 2020. The law precluded hydroelectric generation as a source of renewable energy. This included MID’s New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project at Lake McClure.

SB 591 aims to allow MID to count a portion of its hydroelectric generation toward its renewable-energy purchase requirements.

The legislation marked a bipartisan effort: it was authored by Senator Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres, and co-authored by Assembly Member Adam Gray, D-Merced.

The offset and financial benefit to MID’s ratepayers will depend on the amount of hydroelectricity produced at New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project in a given year. That amount is dependent on the amount of water stored in Lake McClure based on inflow to the reservoir and outflow requirements by state regulators.

MID remains absolutely committed to clean, renewable energy – including hydroelectricity which produces zero carbon emissions.

“We are proud to be the first public utility to sponsor and collaborate with the UC Solar Institute based at UC Merced,” said MID’s Sweigard. The Solar Institute is developing solar technology and working to decrease the cost of solar energy.

For more than two years MID has been involved in discussions with legislators and top officials at the California Energy Commission regarding the renewable energy mandate.

“We will continue to do everything possible to minimize the fees passed on to MID ratepayers and remain extremely grateful for the diligent work and support of our local legislators,” said MID’s Sweigard.

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